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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3446
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 5656
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3374
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3238
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 3899
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3889
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHMCSUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL

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SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: PROCESS FOR SELECTING TURKMEN HAJJ TRAVELERS

11. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

12. (U) During an Embassy-hosted Iftar on September 10, Turkmenistan's Grand Mufti Rowshen Allaberdiyev explained to us the process for selecting the 188 government-funded Hajj travelers each year. He also asserted that, in addition to the government-sponsored group, more than 1,000 Turkmen self-fund their Hajj trips each year. According to Allaberdiyev, individuals apply to go on the Hajj to a provincial-level committee. After those officials decide on candidates for their provinces, those successful candidates are advanced to a national-level review in Ashgabat, where the final cut is made. After that, the successful candidates are invited to travel. Allaberdiyev seemed to indicate that there was no hard and fast criteria for being selected at any level.

12. (SBU) COMMENT: It appears that this review process is only for those vying for government sponsorship and not for self-financing individuals. If you have the money and there is no other reason preventing your travel, you can make the pilgrimage. END COMMENT.
CURRAN